

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
North of Jones Falls Expressway between  
Charles Street and St. Paul Street  
Baltimore  
Baltimore County  
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1015

HABS  
MD  
4-BALT,  
186-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS HABS No. MD-1015  
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MD  
4-BALT,  
186-

Location: North of Jones Falls Expressway between Charles Street and St. Paul Street, Baltimore City, Maryland

UTM: 18.360700.4351900  
Quad: Baltimore East, Maryland

Date of Construction: 1909-1911

Present Owner: National Passenger Railroad Corporation (Amtrak)

Present Use: Vehicular access/parking

Significance: The Baltimore Union Station Driveways are an intrinsic component of a notable early twentieth century Beaux-Art monument. Designed by New York architect Kenneth W. Murchison, Baltimore Union Station served as a gateway to the city and exemplified the economic position of Baltimore during the early twentieth century.

Project Information: This documentation was undertaken in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement, dated 14 May 1990, between the Federal Railroad Administration and the Maryland State Historic Preservation Officer as a mitigative measure prior to demolition of the driveways and ramp.

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BALTIMORE UNION STATION DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 2)

**Descriptive Information**

The Baltimore Union Station Driveways consist of a bi-level, steel and reinforced concrete structure which encloses the station building on three sides. The driveways are structurally joined to the station building at both the upper and lower levels, providing all vehicular access to the property. The portion of the structure south of the station building, connecting Charles Street and St. Paul Street, measures approximately 458 feet in length and approximately 64 feet in width. The portion of the structure northwest of the station building adjacent to Charles Street is roughly triangular in shape, measuring approximately 62 feet in length and approximately 63 feet in width. The portion of the structure southeast of the station building measures approximately 58 feet in length and approximately 63 feet in width. An inclined driveway, connecting the upper and lower levels of the structure, adjoins the south facade. The inclined driveway measures approximately 369 feet in length and approximately 24 feet in width.

The south facade of the lower driveway is marked by an open arcade centered on the main axis of the station building. A central segmentally arched opening, measuring 40 feet in width, is flanked on either side by three segmentally arched openings, each measuring 20 feet in width. Since the three easternmost openings are situated along the north side of the inclined driveway, their heights vary with the incline. The central opening, serving as an entry to the lower driveway, is enframed on either side by a molded buttress, each with a segmentally arched tablet at the top. Piers and spandrels are ornamented with shallow recessed panels. Of the three arched openings west of the entry, only the westernmost one remains open, as originally built. The opening immediately west of the entry has been partially filled with a poured concrete slab, while the middle opening has been filled around a concrete stairway, which presently adjoins the facade. The stairway provides pedestrian access between a parking area south of the driveways and an enclosed, reinforced concrete pedestrian bridge which provides access to the track level north of the station building. The stairway is sheltered by a steel framed canopy, which is enclosed by elongated windows and steel panels.

The west facade of the lower driveway coincides with the north abutment of the Charles Street Bridge over Jones Falls Expressway. The abutment is faced in rusticated ashlar. Portions of the north facade northwest and immediately southeast of the station building are completely open to the tracks. The north facade of the portion adjacent to St. Paul Street is marked by three segmentally arched openings, while the east facade of the portion southeast of the station building is marked by two segmentally arched openings. These openings are similar to those on the south facade of the lower driveway. The east facade of the lower driveway is completely open.

The south facade of the inclined driveway is marked by four segmentally arched openings. The three easternmost openings each contain a steel framed window. Each window is composed of four sections: an 18-light center section, two 6-light side sections, and a 10-light tympanum. Many of the windows have been boarded up. The north facade of the inclined driveway also is marked by four segmentally arched openings. The easternmost opening is fitted with both a double-leaf wood door and a paneled door, set in vertical siding. The opening immediately west of it contains original fenestration, consisting of two paneled doors, two, six over six pane sliding sash windows, and four, triple-light transoms. Next to this opening on the west is another containing four, six over six sliding sash windows and four, triple-light transoms. The westernmost opening contains three, six over six sliding sash windows, a wood paneled door, and four, triple-pane transoms.

BALTIMORE UNION STATION DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 3)

The upper driveway consists of a single U-shaped deck, paved in asphalt. Original paving may have been brick. A concrete curb and sidewalk line the northern edge of the deck. A low, reinforced-concrete parapet extends along both the south side of the deck and the north side of the deck, east of the station building. The north parapet is original, ornamented with classical grilles in a simple geometric pattern of intersecting lines. The south parapet, a relatively recent replacement, is solid and unornamented. Atop the parapet are 15 regularly placed pole lamps, each containing a single lantern. Lamps containing triple lanterns are situated atop the central buttresses and at either end of the south parapet. The original pole lamps were replaced during the 1960s. More recently, a metal sculptural screen was installed along the north side of the deck, west of the station building.

The inclined driveway, extending westward from St. Paul Street, curves sharply at its west end and passes through the central opening of the lower driveway. The inclined driveway is paved in brick and lined along its outside edge with a balustrade of steel rails and reinforced concrete posts. An exception occurs near its west end, where the original parapet has been replaced by an unornamented concrete wall.

The lower driveway consists of a single space, regularly punctuated by rectilinear, reinforced concrete columns and beams. The floor is of poured concrete. At the west end, the floor has been lowered to accommodate vehicular traffic beneath the pedestrian bridge. The interior walls of the lower driveway coincide with the exterior walls of the station building. Each bay of these walls is marked by a window grouping, pedestrian entry, or freight door, corresponding to spaces on the basement level of the station building. From west to east, these spaces originally served the following functions: kitchen, kitchen corridor, stock room, trainmen's locker room, car inspector's room, entrance corridor, women car cleaners' room, toilet rooms, immigrants' waiting room, Adams Express Company room, baggage agent's storage room, vestibule, and baggage room.<sup>1</sup>

### Historical Information

The Baltimore Union Station Driveways, designed and built concurrently with the station building, stand as the culmination of nearly a century of railroad development in Baltimore. Baltimore Union Station was the third station to have been built on this site by the Northern Central Railroad.<sup>2</sup> The Northern Central had been formed in 1854 as a consolidation of various roads, including the Baltimore & Susquehanna, chartered in 1828. The Northern Central linked Baltimore with Sunbury, Pennsylvania, offering connections to New York lines and the Philadelphia & Erie Railroad.<sup>3</sup> Built in 1873, the original station was remodeled in 1881 to serve not only the Northern Central Railroad, but also the Philadelphia, Wilmington

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<sup>1</sup>Baltimore Union Station, Drawing 103, Basement Plan, 5 March 1910, blue-line print on file, Whitman Requaardt and Associates, Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>2</sup>"City to Be Minus 'Union' Station Tomorrow, First Time in 50 Years," *Baltimore Sun*, 31 July 1928; Barbara Hoff, *Pennsylvania Station (Union Station)*, National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, DC, 14 April 1975.

<sup>3</sup>William B. Sipes, *Pennsylvania Railroad: Its Origin, Construction, Condition, and Connections*, The Passenger Department, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1875, 20.

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 4)

& Baltimore, the Union, the Western Maryland, and the Baltimore & Potomac.<sup>4</sup> In 1886 the original station was replaced with a two-story brick building and adjoining train shed (Page 10), which after 1902 served as the principal station for the Philadelphia, Baltimore, & Washington Railroad.<sup>5</sup> Known as Charles Street Union Station, this facility eventually proved inadequate in accommodating the rapidly increasing traffic loads of one of the busiest rail lines in the country. By the early twentieth century the Charles Street Union Station was widely viewed as the poorest passenger station of any great city in the country, unworthy of so important a city as Baltimore.<sup>6</sup> In response to these conditions, Gamble Latrobe, general agent in Baltimore of the Northern Central Railroad, and Bernard Carter, counsel for the Pennsylvania Railroad, notified city authorities in 1909 that in return for certain privileges to increase trackage, the company was prepared to build a new station for the sum of \$500,000, exclusive of the costs of the approaches. Despite considerable dissatisfaction with the small amount of the allocation, agreement was reached between the company and the city, and an ordinance was signed by Mayor J. Barry Mahool. The ordinance provided for the following measures: the area adjacent to the station was to be abandoned as a freight yard, the railroad was to erect a new bridge over its tracks at Charles Street and make alterations to the bridge at Maryland Avenue; the entrance to a new station was to be at street rather than track level, as in the old station; and privileges extended to the company were not to be regarded as a franchise.<sup>7</sup> Later that same year an architectural competition was organized for design of a new station. Of eight entries received, that of Kenneth Meckenzie Murchison was judged the best, resulting in a commission.<sup>8</sup>

Murchison was a prominent New York architect,<sup>9</sup> closely associated with American Beaux-Arts architecture during the early twentieth century.<sup>10</sup> Not only was Mr. Murchison educated at

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<sup>4</sup>*Baltimore Sun*, 31 July 1928.

<sup>5</sup>*Baltimore Sun*, 31 July 1928; George H. Burgess and Miles C. Kennedy, *Centennial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1846-1946*, The Pennsylvania Railroad Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1949, 523; Timothy Jacobs, *The History of the Pennsylvania Railroad*, Bonanza/Bison Books, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1988, 29.

<sup>6</sup>Clayton Colman Hall, ed., *Baltimore: Its History and Its People, Volume I: History*, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, New York, New York and Chicago, Illinois, 1912, 400.

<sup>7</sup>Hall, 400.

<sup>8</sup>Gamble Latrobe, General Agent and Superintendent, Northern Central Railway Company, Union Railroad Company of Baltimore, Philadelphia, Baltimore & Washington Railroad Company, letter to A.S. Goldsborough, Secretary to the Mayor, 6 November 1909, Mahool Administration, File 338, RG 9, S 14, Box 112, Baltimore City Archives; *Baltimore News*, 23 December 1927.

<sup>9</sup>The biographical sketch is based on "K.M. Murchison, 66, Dies in the Subway," *New York Times*, 16 December 1938, 26.

<sup>10</sup>Beginning in the 1880s and continuing into the 1930s the architecture of monumental public and private buildings in the United States was adapted largely from design principles taught in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. These ideas were disseminated by the many

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 5)

the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, he was a president of the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, co-organizer of the Beaux-Arts Ball, and resident of the Beaux-Arts Apartments (310 East 44th Street), which he co-designed with Raymond Hood. He also was known as an architectural writer, a financier, and an impersonator. Murchison is said to have resembled George Washington whom he played during the New York Bicentennial celebration of Washington's birth in 1932. Born in New York on 29 September 1872, Murchison graduated from Columbia University in 1894 with a Ph.B. degree. Between 1897 and 1900 he studied at the Ecole, and in 1902, opened an architectural office in New York. Between 1918 and 1919 his practice was interrupted briefly by service in the U.S. Army Engineers. Between July 1924 and November 1929 he wrote a column entitled "Mr. Murchison of New York Says," which appeared regularly in the journal *Architect*. This column provided a chatty commentary on architectural practice during the 1920s.<sup>11</sup> Among his major commissions were several railroad stations, including in addition to Baltimore Union Station, Delaware, Lackawanna & Western terminals in Hoboken, New Jersey and Buffalo, New York; Buffalo Union Station, Buffalo, New York; Havana Union Station, Havana, Cuba; and Jacksonville Union Terminal, Jacksonville, Florida.

Among his other works were Muson S. S. Line Building, New York; U.S. Marine Hospital, Staten Island, New York; First National Bank Building, Hoboken, New Jersey; New Colonial Hotel, Nassau, British West Indies; Dunes Country Club, Narragansett, Rhode Island; and Sands Point Bath Club, Long Island, New York. In 1929 Murchison was awarded the Litt. D. degree from Columbia University. He also was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and a Decorated Officier d'Académie and Legion of Honor.<sup>12</sup> On 16 December 1938 Murchison died unexpectedly in New York at the age of 66.

Based on a competition drawing of the building's south facade, Murchison's design appears to have been built largely as proposed.<sup>13</sup> A rather severe classical composition, the station

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American students who attended the Ecole, some of whom went on to teach in newly-founded American schools of architecture. The curriculum of the Ecole emphasized the plan. Students learned by experience to analyze the essential parts of a plan and to distribute them in a logically manner along a system of axes and crossings. The facade was developed as a corollary of a successful plan. Clearly reflecting the building's spatial composition, facades were generally designed in the disciplined vocabulary of the Renaissance style (Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koepfer, *American Architecture, 1607-1976*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1982, 11). Beaux-Arts architecture in the United States tended to be an abstraction of that taught in the Ecole. One suspects that identification with the French artistic tradition and the imagery of large-scale monumental compositions were at least as compelling to American architects and their clients as were the planning principles of the Ecole. In any event, Beaux-Arts architecture had an enormous impact on American building during a period of unprecedented urban growth and development.

<sup>11</sup>Robert A. M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, Thomas Mellins, *New York 1930, Architecture and Urbanism between the Two World Wars*, Rizzoli, New York, New York, 1987, 11.

<sup>12</sup>*Who Was Who in America, Volume 1, 1897-1942*, A. N. Marquis Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1942.

<sup>13</sup>A print of this drawing was enclosed with Latrobe's letter to Goldsborough, 6 November 1909.

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 6)

building is similar in appearance to the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Station in Scranton, Pennsylvania, which Murchison had designed in 1907.<sup>14</sup> However, unlike the Scranton Station, the Baltimore Union Station was to be built on a constricted flood plain site, some 18-25 feet below the level of surrounding streets. Furthermore, by law the building was to be accessible from street rather than track level, as in the Charles Street Union Station. Thus the driveways appear to have been designed in part as a direct response to these site conditions. They successfully negotiate the grade separation, providing vehicular access for drop-offs, taxi stations, baggage delivery and pick-up, and building services, all within a classically inspired envelope which from the south, assumes the appearance of a palatial terrace. This imagery and functional integration is typical of the Beaux-Arts ideal, to which Murchison aspired.

The driveways were intrinsic components of a composition which included a station building, measuring approximately 275 feet in length and approximately 60 feet in width, an enclosed concourse, measuring approximately 330 feet in length and approximately 28 feet in width, and adjoining the north facade of the station building, an enclosed passenger bridge over the tracks, measuring approximately 120 feet in length and approximately 50 feet in width (Page 11). From the bridge six flights of stairs descend to the platforms below, affording travelers access to the trains without crossing the tracks at grade. The platforms, each measuring from 600 to 1100 feet in length and 20 feet in width, were designed to accommodate trains of 15 cars. Each platform is sheltered by a continuous steel and concrete canopy.<sup>15</sup> The driveways, while integrated components of the Baltimore Union Station, appear not to have been given equal standing to other components of the design. Perhaps this was due to their utilitarian function. For example, the elevation drawing which was circulated as the competition entry shows only the station building above street level, not even suggesting the presence of the driveways.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, a first floor plan of the building, published in *The American Architect*, shows only the station building, enclosed concourse, and enclosed passenger bridge, barely suggesting the presence of the driveways by showing a "retaining wall" east of the station building.<sup>17</sup> One suspects that based on this evidence, the driveways may not have been designed concurrently with the other station components. Working drawings of the driveways postdate those of the station building by some six months.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Carroll L. V. Meeks, *The Railroad Station, An Architectural History*, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut and London, England, 1975, 135, Illustration 182.

<sup>15</sup>Hall, 400-401.

<sup>16</sup>Print enclosed with Latrobe's letter to Goldsborough, 6 November 1909.

<sup>17</sup>*The American Architect*, Volume XCVII, Number 1798, 8 June 1910.

<sup>18</sup>Most of the original drawings of the station building are dated 5 March 1910, while those of the driveways are dated September 1910 or 6 October 1910. Blue-line prints and microprints on file, Whitman Requardt and Associates, Baltimore, Maryland.

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 7)

In April 1910, a contract for construction of the building was awarded to the lowest bidder, J. Henry Miller Company of Baltimore.<sup>19</sup> Construction required one year and seven months to complete and an expenditure of \$750,000.<sup>20</sup> Total costs, including those associated with approaches, are said to have amounted to approximately \$1,000,000.<sup>21</sup> Another estimate placed the total cost at \$2,000,000.<sup>22</sup> During demolition of the Charles Street Union Station and construction of the new station, the railroad was served by a temporary facility located between the site of the new station building and St. Paul Street.<sup>23</sup> The new station opened to the public on 15 September 1911.<sup>24</sup>

In light of the inadequacies of the Charles Street Union Station, it was perhaps inevitable that the new Baltimore Union Station was to serve as a source of local pride (Pages 13, 14, 15, 16, 17). Its image appeared in numerous promotional publications and picture post cards during the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>25</sup> In 1928 the building was renamed Pennsylvania Station, more accurately reflecting its role in the community. Most of the railroads originally served by the station had long been absorbed by the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the building no longer served as a union facility.<sup>26</sup> Even before 1928 the building may have been known informally as Pennsylvania Station.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>J. Barry Mahool, Mayor, letter to Kenneth M. Murchison, 6 April 1910, Mahoon Administration, File 338, RG 9, S 14, Box 112, Baltimore City Archives.

<sup>20</sup>*Baltimore News*, 23 December 1927.

<sup>21</sup>Hall, 401.

<sup>22</sup>*Baltimore Sun*, 31 July 1928.

<sup>23</sup>Photograph showing temporary station building, 1910, Negative L 657, Photograph Collections. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Department.

<sup>24</sup>*Baltimore News*, 23 December 1927.

<sup>25</sup>See, for example: The Municipality, *The Baltimore Book*, National Democratic Convention Number, 1912, 76; *Baltimore: The City of Monuments*, The Horn-Shafer Company of Baltimore, 1914, 39; and Allen K. Bond, M.D., *Guide to Baltimore and Environs*, The Norman, Remington Company, Baltimore, Maryland, 1926, 174; Views of Union Station, Post Card Collection, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>26</sup>*Baltimore Sun*, 31 July 1928. According to George M. Smith, division superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the new name had been proposed by M. A. Long, chairman of a committee of the Association of Commerce. This committee had been appointed to investigate a proposal to build a new union station, combining operations of both the Pennsylvania and Baltimore & Ohio railroads. Since both railroads opposed the idea, the proposal was abandoned.

<sup>27</sup>It is interesting to note that Murchison's competition drawing contained the frieze inscription "Pennsylvania Station." Print enclosed with Latrobe's letter to Goldsborough, 6 November 1909.



BALTIMORE UNION STATION DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 8)

There is little documentary evidence of how the driveways were used over the years. Presumably, they served well in their original function, providing vehicular access to the station. Congestion on the upper driveway, which continues to the present, appears to have been a problem at least as early as 1938.<sup>28</sup> In 1943 a steel framed canteen building, measuring 50 feet in length and 40 feet in width, was erected in the former baggage truck area of the upper driveway, east of the station building. Designed by Raymond Loewy, this modern addition was in stark visual contrast to the subdued classical architecture of the building. Operated by volunteers from Women's Aid of the Maryland Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the canteen served the needs of military personnel during the Second World War.<sup>29</sup> Following the war, the addition functioned as office space. It was demolished during the late 1970s. By the early 1980s the station building, enclosed concourse, and enclosed passenger bridge had been rehabilitated, and their significant architectural features restored.<sup>30</sup> However, the driveways were not included in the rehabilitation program and presently are in poor condition.

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<sup>28</sup>*Baltimore Evening Sun*, 8 November 1938.

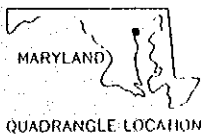
<sup>29</sup>"Pennsy to Build Canteen," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 20 May 1943; "Lounge Is Opened at Pennsy Station," *Baltimore Sun*, 21 August 1943.

<sup>30</sup>Carleton Jones, "Penn Station Reborn," *The Sun Magazine*, 28 November 1982.

BALTIMORE UNION STATION DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 9)

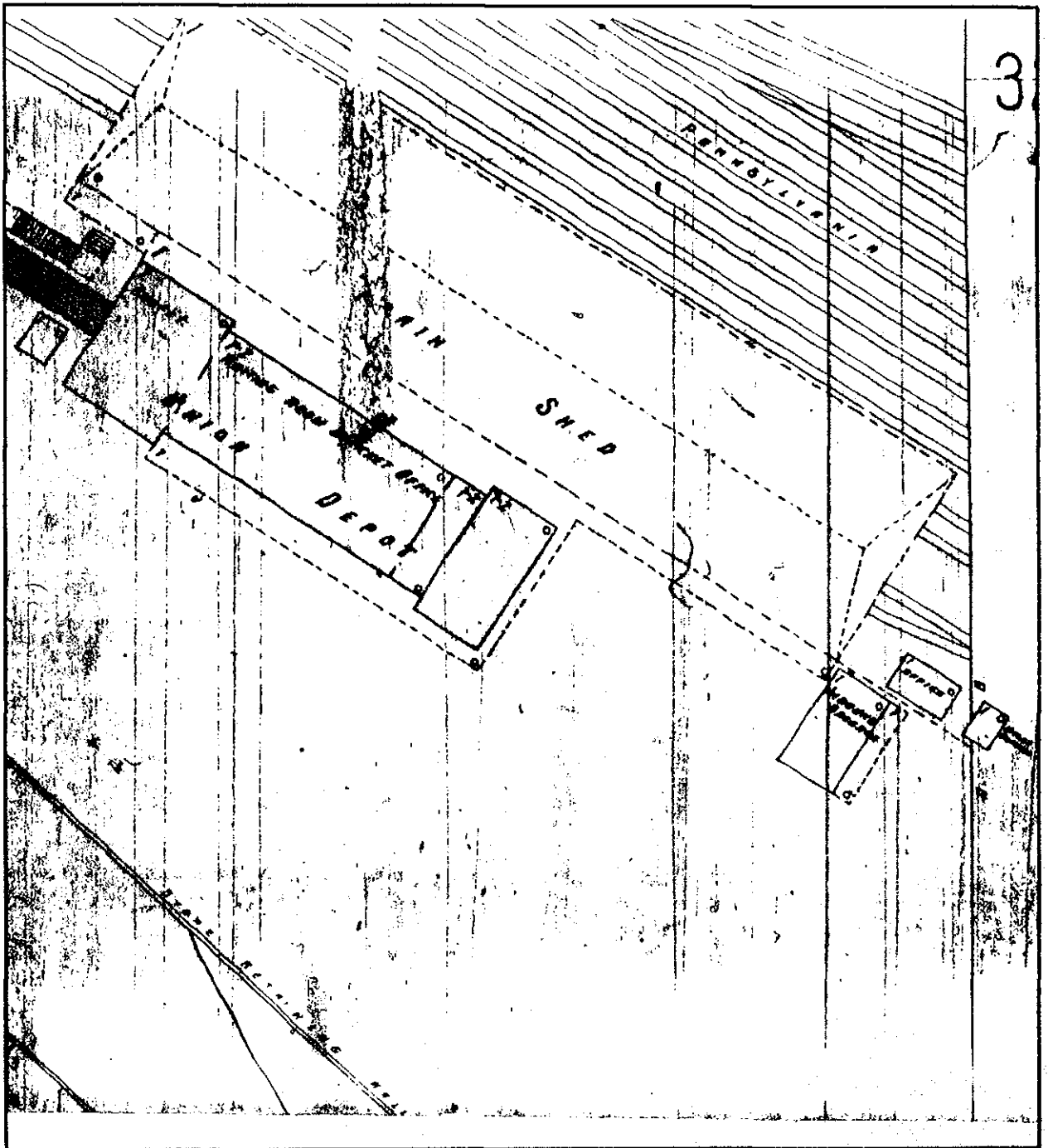


Project Location



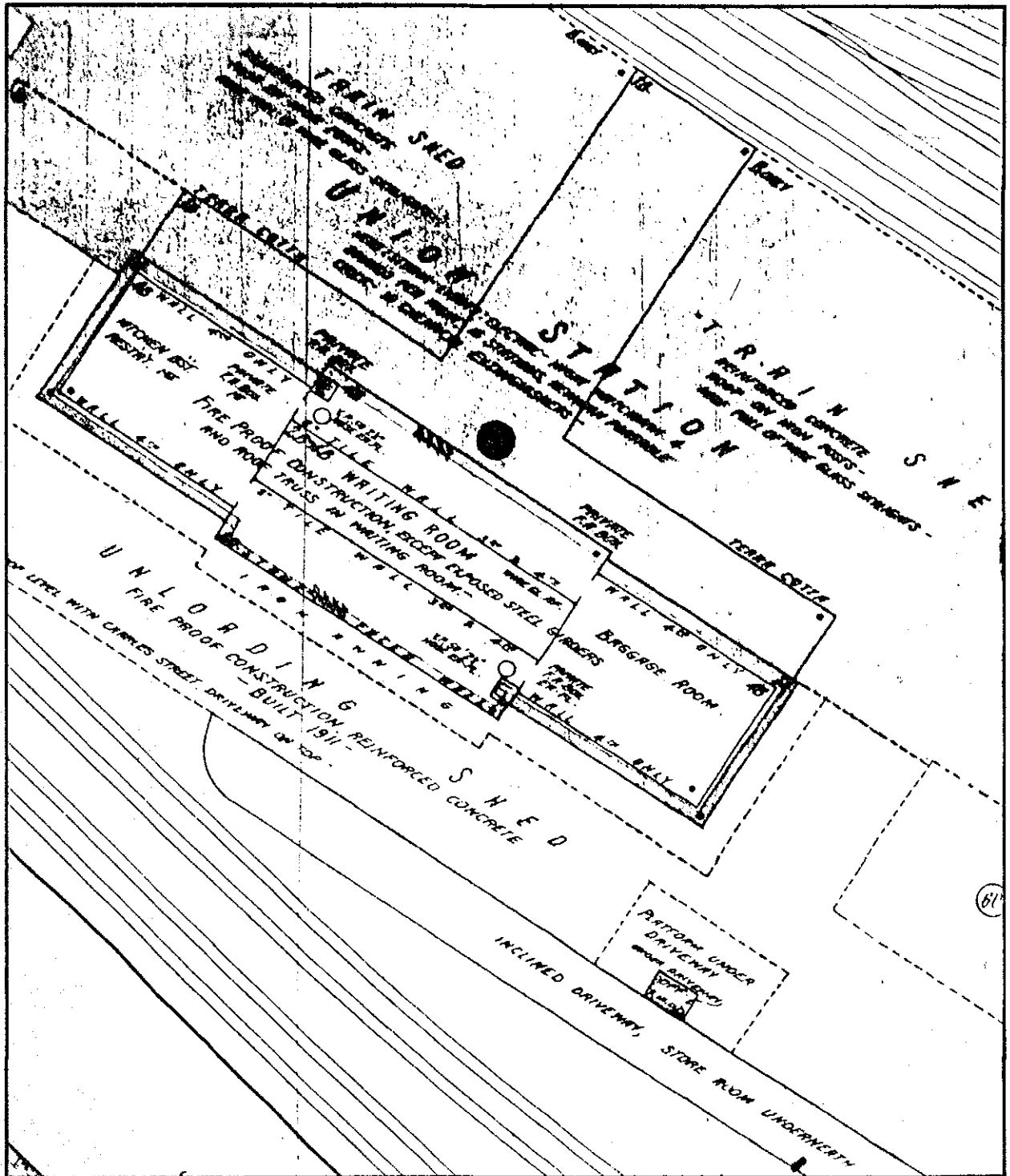
USGS 7.5 Minute Series  
Baltimore East, MD Quadrangle  
Photorevised 1974

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 10)



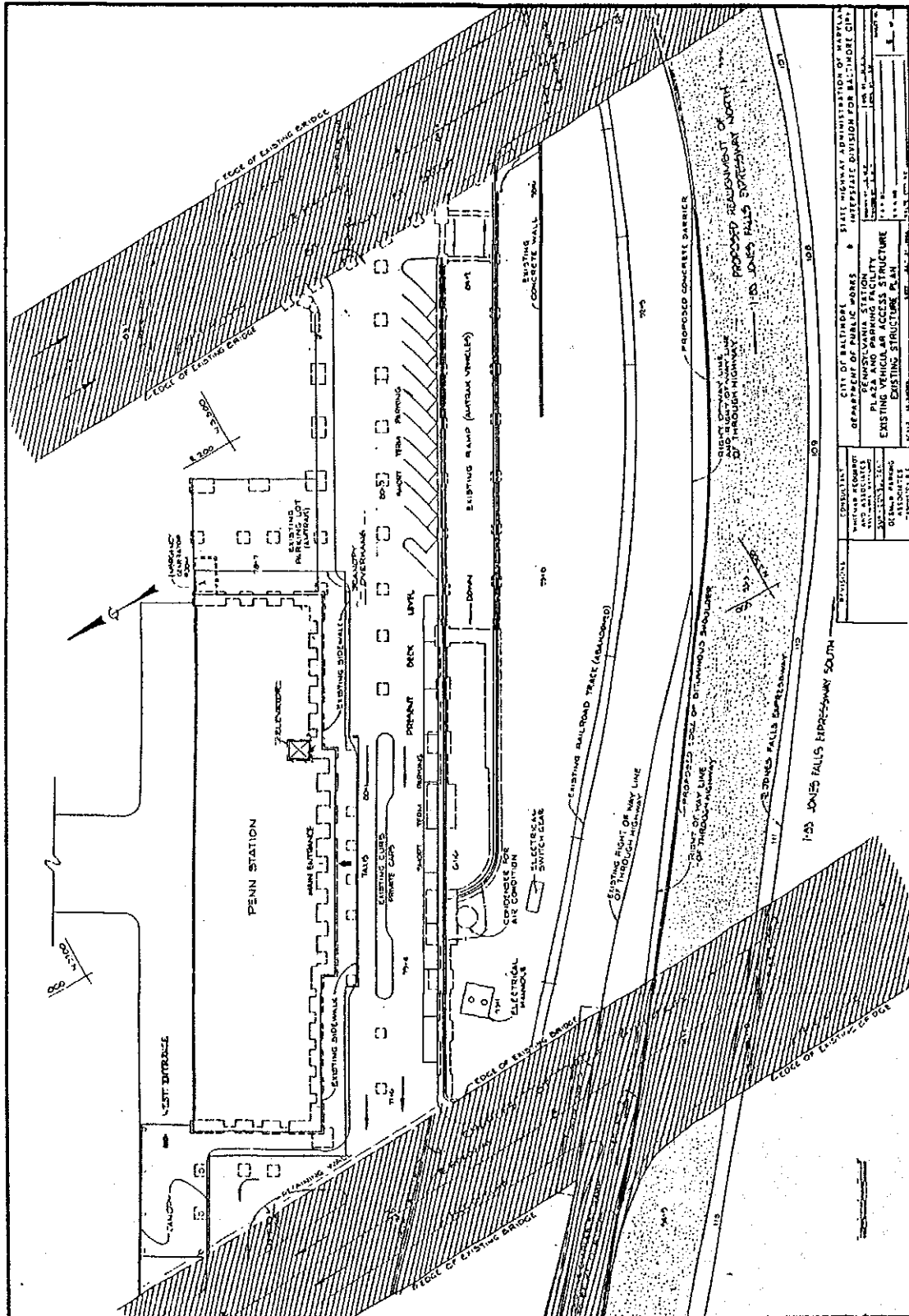
Detail of Plate 307, Insurance Maps of Baltimore, Maryland, Volume 3,  
Sanborn Map Company, New York, New York, 1902

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 11)



Detail of Plate 289, Insurance Maps of Baltimore, Maryland, Volume 3,  
Sanborn Map Company, New York, New York, 1914

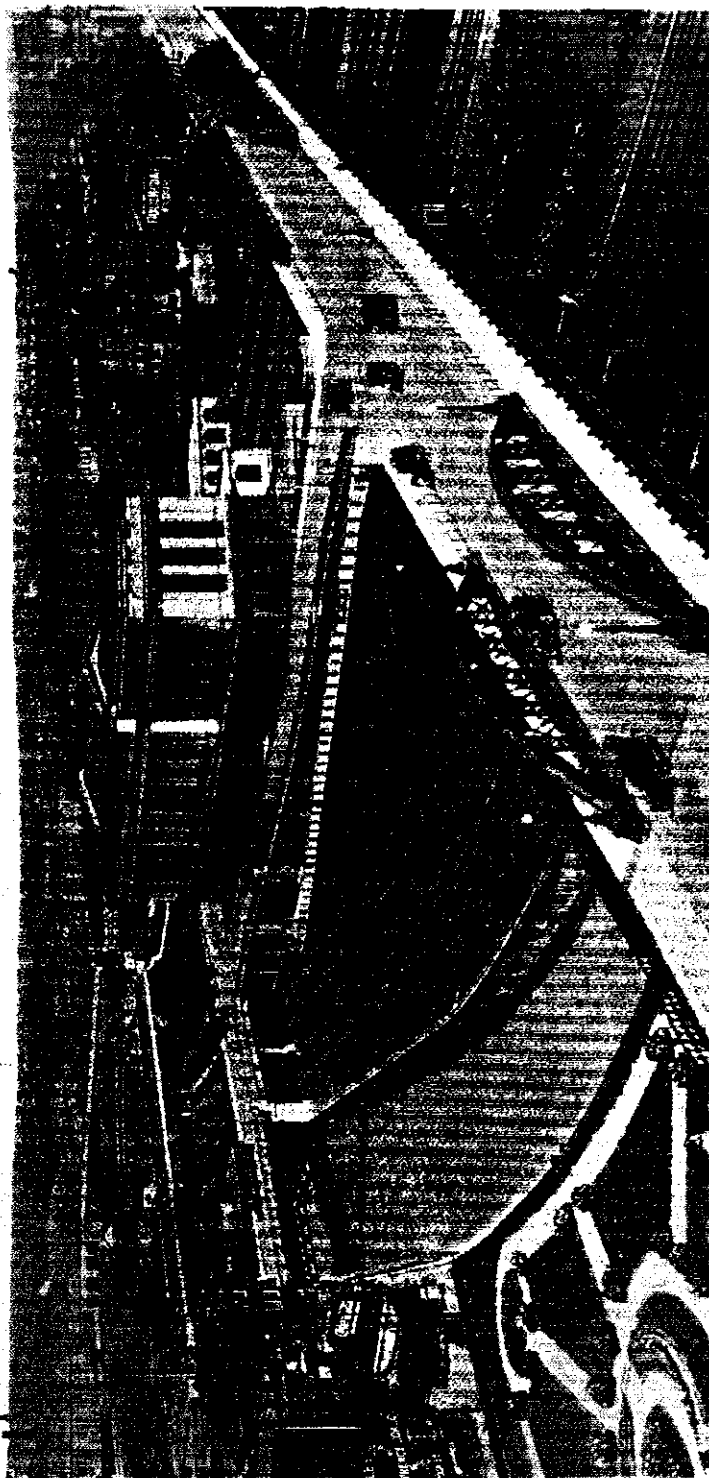
BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 12)



Site Plan (Whitman Requardt and Associates, Pennsylvania Station Plaza and Parking Facility.  
Engineering Feasibility Study, Report prepared for City of Baltimore Department of  
Public Works and Interstate Division for Baltimore City, August 1987)

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 13)

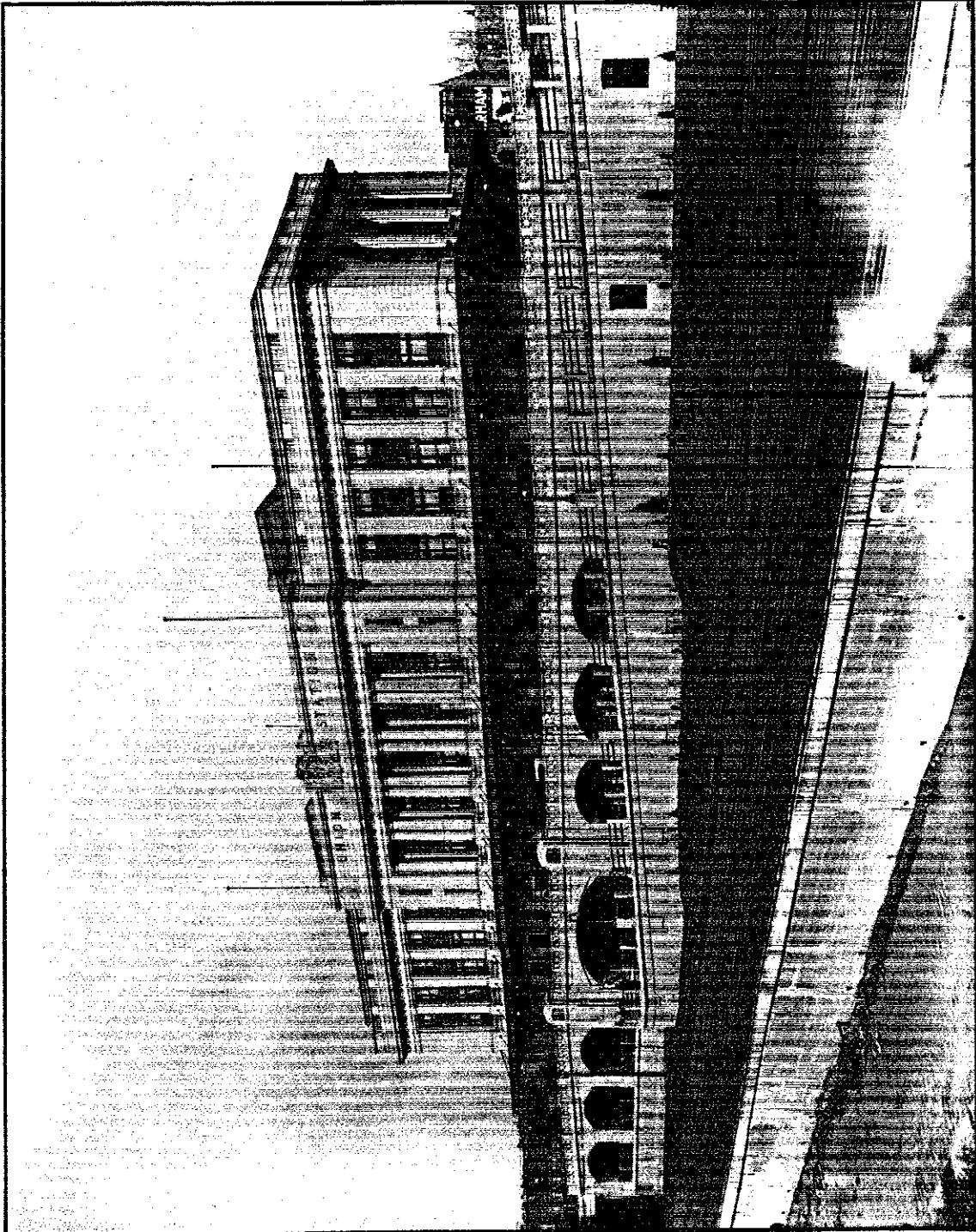
BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF SAINT PAUL STREET BRIDGE AND PENNSYLVANIA STATION, BALTIMORE, MD.



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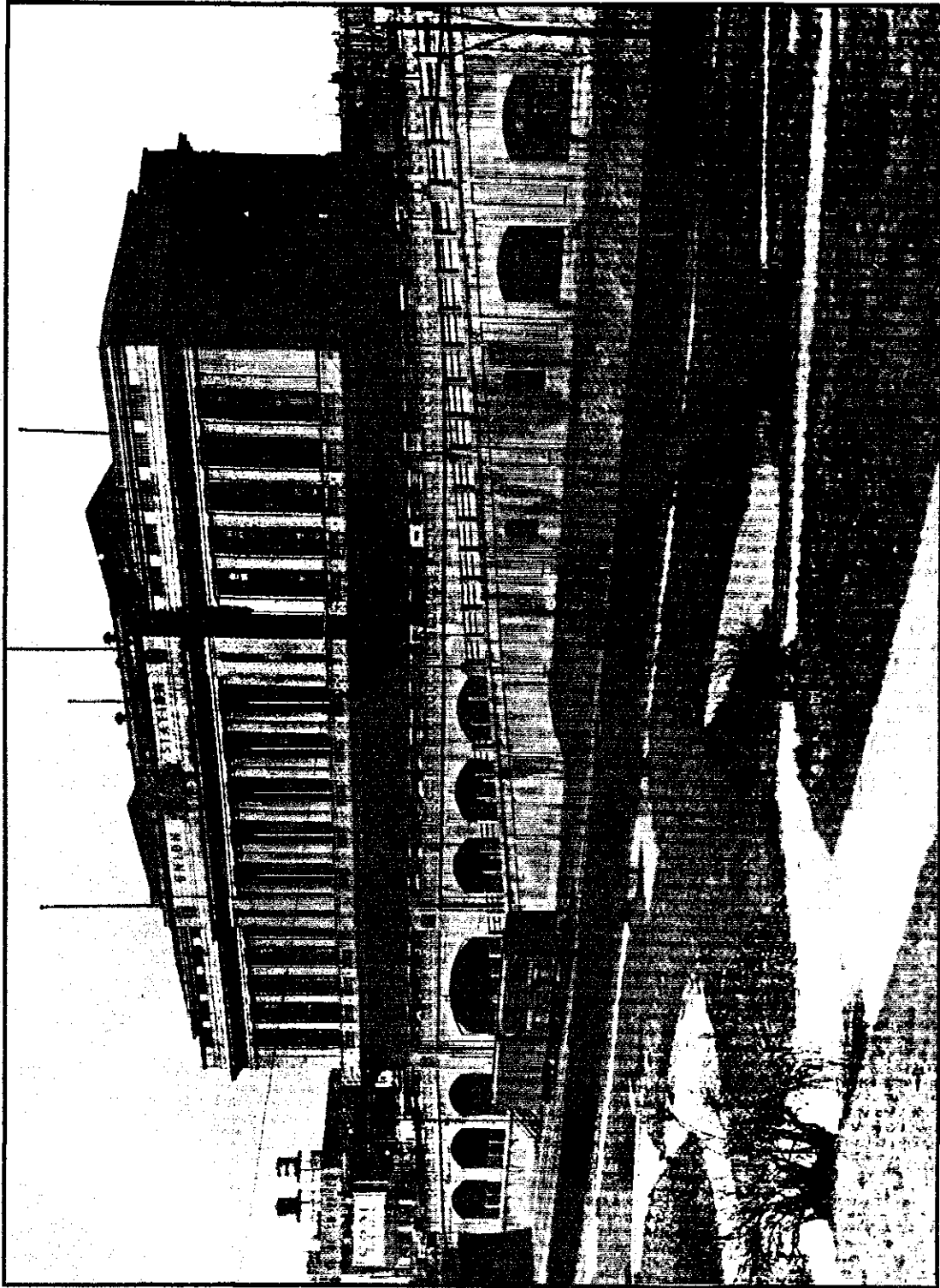
Aerial View of Baltimore Union Station from the Southeast, c. 1910s  
(Number 70907, Post Card Collection, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland)

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station, Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 14)



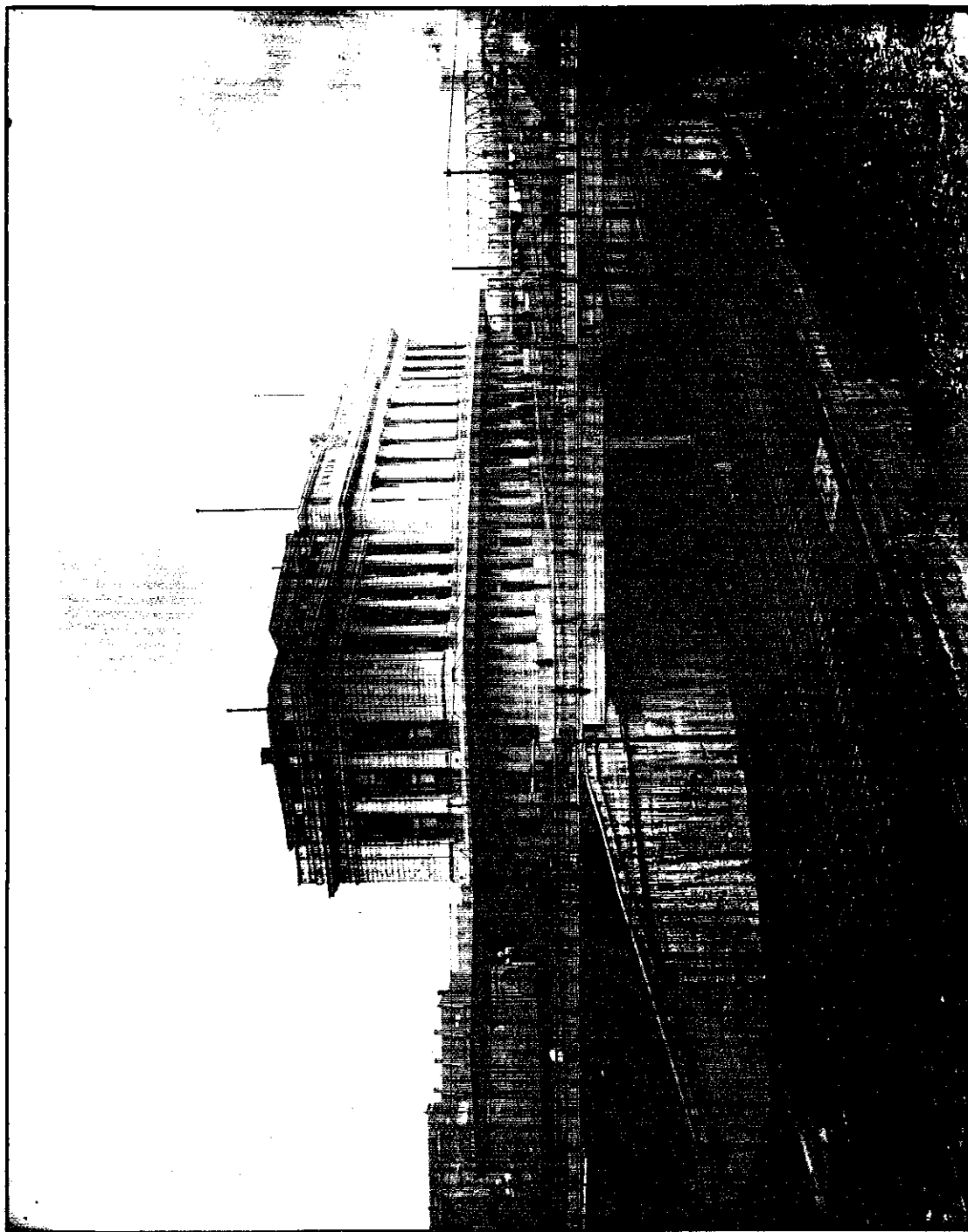
View of Baltimore Union Station from the South, c. 1910s  
(Negative Number PP8.762, Photograph Collection,  
Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland)

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 15)



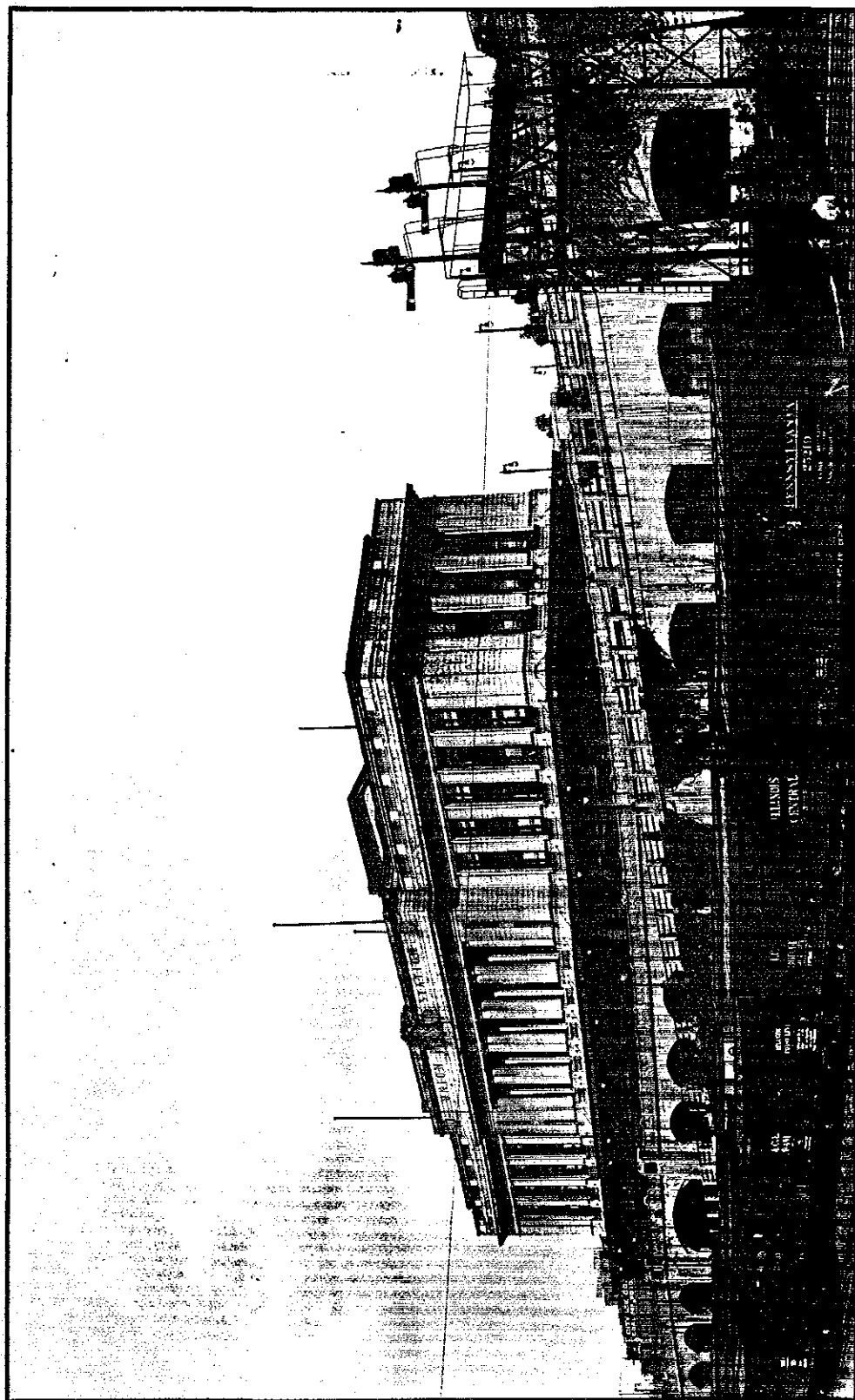
View of Baltimore Union Station from the South, c. 1910s (Negative Number B 335,  
Barker Collection, Maryland Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Maryland)





View of Baltimore Union Station from the West, c. 1910s  
(Negative Number MC 4748, Photograph Collection,  
The Peale Museum, Baltimore City Life Museums, Baltimore, Maryland)

BALTIMORE UNION STATION, DRIVEWAYS  
(Pennsylvania Station Driveways)  
HABS No. MD-1015 (Page 17)



View of Baltimore Union Station from the South, c. 1920  
(Negative Number MC 9306-1, Photograph Collection,  
The Peale Museum, Baltimore City Life Museums, Baltimore, Maryland)

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Volume 3, Plate 289. Sanborn Map Company, New York, New York, 1914.

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(Pennsylvania Station Driveways)  
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